

United States Patent No. 6,106,305 ("Kozel et al."), rejected claims 7 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sitz in view of United States Patent No. 5,713,744 ("Laub"), rejected claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sitz in view of United States Patent No. 5,647,750 ("Tran et al.") and rejected claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sitz in view of Laub. The Examiner did not expressly reject claim 10 on the basis of any prior art references. The Examiner objected to claims 21 and 27 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

By the present amendment, claim 9 has been rewritten. Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested. Claims 1-27 are pending in this application.

The Examiner rejected claims 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Specifically, the Examiner stated that claims 9 and 10 were incomplete for omitting essential structural cooperative relationships of elements, such omission amounting to a gap between the necessary structural connections. The omitted structural cooperative relationships were the cooperative relation between the "terminal portion" and the "connector". Applicant has corrected the typographical error in claim 9 by replacing the term "connector" with the term "contact". This minor typographical error correction is sufficient to overcome the 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph rejection, and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph rejection of claims 9 and 10 is respectfully requested.

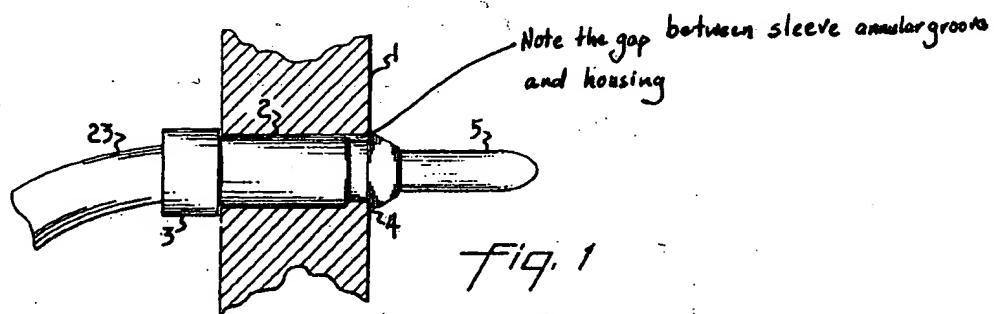
The Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 6, 11, 13-20, 22, 23, 25 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Sitz. Applicant disagrees with the Examiner's rejection.

"A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference." *Verdegall Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of Calif.*, 814 F.2d 628, 631 (Fed. Cir. 1987). Because Sitz does not recite each and every element set forth in claims 1-4, 6, 11, 13-20, 22, 23, 25 and 26, it cannot anticipate the applicant's connector disclosed in the present application.

Independent claims 1 and 22 recite an electrical connector having, *inter alia*, a dielectric housing having a plurality of substantially open receptacles arranged in an array, a plurality of

electrically conductive contacts positioned within at least some of said receptacles, a plurality of retention members within the receptacle, at least one of said retention members engaging at least one of said contacts so as to impart an ungapped condition to the connector at the location of the retention member within the housing.

Sitz discloses an electrical connector having a dielectric housing 1, the dielectric housing having a plug receiving aperture 2 having a detent 4. The contact 5 is received within a sleeve 8 (which the Examiner has characterized as a retention member), and the sleeve includes an annular groove 20. When the contact/sleeve combination is inserted into the housing, a portion of the sleeve annular groove 20 is captured by the housing detent 4 in order to retain the contact/sleeve in the housing. Contrary to the Examiner's characterization, the sleeve 8, when inserted into the housing 1, does not result in an ungapped condition between the sleeve 8 and the housing 1. Rather, as is shown in Figure 1 of Sitz, only that portion of the sleeve annular groove that engages the plug receiving aperture detent 4 results in an ungapped condition; the remainder of the sleeve 8 has a gap between the sleeve annular groove 20 and the plug receiving aperture 2, as shown in the annotated Figure 1 below:



Thus, Sitz does not disclose, *inter alia*, an electrical connector having "retention members engaging at least one of said contacts so as to impart an ungapped condition to the connector at the location of the retention member within the housing." Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of independent claims 1 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Sitz for at least the above reason. As claims 2-4, 6, 11, 13-20, 23, 25 and 26 are ultimately dependent on either independent claim 1 or 22, claims 2-4, 6,

11, 13-20, 23, 25 and 26 are likewise not anticipated by Sitz for at least the above reason.

Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 2-4, 6, 11, 13-20, 23, 25 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Sitz.

The Examiner rejected the claims 5, 7-9, 12 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sitz in view of various other references. Claims 5, 7-9, 12 and 24 are ultimately dependent on either independent claim 1 or independent claim 22, which the applicant has argued above is not anticipated by Sitz for at least the reason stated above. None of the other references combined with Sitz overcome the shortcomings of Sitz argued above. Thus, the combination of Sitz and the other references cited by the Examiner does not establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness. Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 5, 7-9, 12 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sitz in view of the other references for at least the above reason.

The Examiner also made the following prior art of record, but did not rely upon it: United States Patent No. 3,703,701 ("Zimmerman et al."), United States Patent No. 5,188,543 ("Swift"), United States Patent No. 4,544,221 ("Schaller"), United States Patent No. 2,383,909 ("Buchanan"), United States Patent No. 4,144,509 ("Boutros") and United States Patent No. 4,768,970 ("Nestor"). These references, whether taken alone or in combination, do not disclose, teach or suggest the subject matter claimed by the applicant.

Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider the rejections in view of the rewritten claims and in light of the above comments, and allowance of all claims is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conversation would facilitate prosecution of the present application, the Examiner is invited to call Applicant's attorney.

Respectfully submitted,
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FOR: CONNECTOR HAVING SUPPORTIVE BARRIER COMPONENTS

SERIAL NO.: 09/428,135

ART UNIT: 2839

ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.: 99-247 US

Version of Amended Claims Showing the Changes Made

9. (Amended) The electrical connector according to claim 1, wherein said contact [connector] has a terminal portion which is formed to be offset with respect to said receptacle through axis.